

October 19, 2024

Honorable Robert S. Ballou
U.S. District Court Judge
Roanoke, VA

Your Honor,

I kindly ask you to take a moment and look beyond the rigid guidelines of the law, to view my brother not as just another case but as a person—a man whose life has been shaped by trauma, loss, and sacrifice. We are all human, each of us with our own struggles, and my brother's story is one that reflects deep family ties, resilience, and an unwavering dedication to the people he loves.

In the span of just three years, we lost nearly everyone who meant the world to us—our mother, father, aunt, and grandfather. We were a close-knit family, and their deaths left my brother and me as the last ones standing. In the wake of those tragedies, my brother became the rock of our family. He stepped up in ways that many wouldn't, doing everything he could to support us all including two small children that were our cousins that lived with us. My grandmother, devastated by the loss of her husband and son, relied on my brother to provide during difficult times. Even as a young man, he was the one she turned to for help. He would work side jobs just to make sure we had food, clothes, and something to celebrate during the holidays. I was still a teenager at the time, and I looked up to him in ways I can't fully explain.

Your Honor, this is a man who has always helped others, whether it was pulling an elderly neighbor's car out of the snow or stepping in as a protector when times got tough. He gave everything to his family, and when our father and grandfather passed, he carried the weight of their loss silently, never shedding a tear, even when my grandfather took his last breath in his arms. That's the kind of strength he's had to show, but it's also the kind of pain that stays inside.

My brother's own family life was far from easy. His wife betrayed him, cheated on him, and even brought drugs into their home; yet my brother stayed. He stayed because of his children, because he wanted them to have the family we lost. Even being misled by his wife into believing the first child was his, when he wasn't. He shouldered responsibilities—he cooked, cleaned, shopped, and did everything he could for his kids while the mother of his kids had vanished. When it was alleged by the wife that her new boyfriend sexually assaulted his son, my brother was the one who reported it to the police, and I watched him break down in tears for the first time in my life. This man who had held our family together was finally broken by what had happened to his own child.

While my brother was locked up, his wife attempted to drown their child. She was behind bars for only 6 months. As you read this, she is walking free but still convicted of child abuse. Yet here we are, Your honor. My brother—a man who has served his community, who graduated with honors, who has always held a stable job since high school, now faces 40 years behind bars. How is this justice? How does this reflect the man he is, or the potential he still has?

My brother's life, his character, and the man he has always been, are not defined by the charges he faces. He has never been to jail before; this experience will change him, and not for the better. I ask you to consider a sentence that will allow him to get the rehabilitation and therapy he needs and will give him the chance to rebuild his life.

Your Honor, my brother's life has meaning. His mistakes do not define him. He has shown strength, loyalty, and love in ways many cannot understand. He has so much to give still, if only given the chance. Please consider his humanity, his potential, and the possibility of a different path—one that focuses on restoration and redemption, rather than punishment.

Thank you for considering these arguments. I wish you grace as you make this hard decision, but I want you to know that Davey is a good person who has suffered a lot. He has made bad decisions; but he is not the worst thing he has done. He will prove he is a better man than this case shows.

Sincerely,

Allison Sisk